(e) The impact of these liberalised imports on the production and employment within the country is unlikely to be significant. Such imports would be subject to payment of customs duties.

Exports from North-East

2154. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of agricultural mineral, forestry, industrial and other produce being exported form North Eastern region;

(b) the State-wise, list of items exported from and outside (through strock transfer) the region and, item-wise, export earning during last five years; and

(c) the specific steps being initiated for promotion of export activities in the region?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) As per the study conducted by the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) on the export potential of North-Eastern Region the following items were identified—Oranges, Pine-apple, Grapes, Passion fruits, Litchi, Guvava, Bananas, Bird eye chillie, Asparagas, Spices both in whole and ground form (ginger, tej patta), Floricultural products including orchids, medicinal plants and herbs, essential oils (lemon grapes oil, citronelia oil), Organically grown food items including tea, silk fabrics, silk garments, handloom furnishings and made-ups, cane and bamboo products, coal, limestone & petroleum based products.

(b) The Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) under the Ministry of Commerce does not get and maintain exports data on a State or a region basis.

(c) As a part of an on-going effort, the Ministry of Commerce takes appropriate steps to give thrust for promotion of exports from the country as a whole and also specifically from the North Eastern Region. Some of the recent steps taken for promotion of exports from North East are as under:—

1. As per the EXIM Policy Export Houses Star Trading Houses etc. are eligible for Special Import Licences at 1% of the total turnover if they source at least 10% of total export turnover from NER.

2. Indian institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) has just submitted the study of the export potential of North Eastern Region (NER) including border trade. The recommendations of the study are being examined in consultation with the concerned agencies.

3. Under the Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme (CIBS) which envisages balancing capital investment for relieving bottlenecks in export infrastructure, two projects of Meghalaya Govt. have been approved where GOI's participation is Rs. 3.08 crores. Another project for construction of a composite building at Zokawthar, Mizoram has also been sanctioned and Rs. 2.00 crores have been released for the purpose.

4. Airports Authority of India has planned a cargo terminal with all associated facilities as a part of the Master Plan for development of Guwahati Airport.

5. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is setting up a walk-in-type cold storage for perishables at Guwahati Airport. Another walk-in-type cold storage is to be set up at Agartala Airport.

6. RITES have been asked to conduct a transport optimisation study with a view to examine international linkages and transit/transhipment arrangements between India and neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan.

7. An Inter-Ministerial Task Force under the Ministry of Commerce has been set up to review the entire

North-East border and inter-country trade issue and to report on trade opportunities and manufacturing potential for export in the North East.

8. The Government has also sanctioned two Export Promotion Industrial Parks (EPIP) in the North Eastern States of Meghalaya and Assam.

Annual accounts and reports of FIEO

2155. SHRI RAGHAVJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Federation of Indian Export Organisation held their annual general meeting on 29th May, 1998 to consider and pass annual accounts and annual reports for the year 1996-97 for laying on the Table of the House.

(b) what are the reasons for delay and whether any punishment or displeasure was communicated to FIEO;

(c) whether the President of FIEO has publicly announced on 29th May, 1998 in the above meeting to hold the next annual meeting before 30th September, 1998 to consider annual accounts and annual report for the year 1997-98; and

(d) if so, whether Government will ensure that this last date of next annual general meeting will be observed?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Managing Committee of FIEO decided to invite Prime Minister of India to innugrate the Annual General Meeting of FIEO for the year 1996-97. Prime Minister could bot spare the time to innugrate the AGM and hence the delay. Ministry of Commerce has written to FIEO to hold the AGM within the specified time and also intimated the concern for delay.

(c) and (d) President, FIEO indicated in the 32nd Annual General Meeting held on 29th May, 1998 that efforts would be made to hold the next Annual General Meeting in due course. Government has directed FIEO to hold the AGM within the prescribed time.

Decanalisation to Boost Mica Export

2156. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the policy of decanalisation was adopted in 1990 to boost up mica trade, to give more employment and to earn more foreign exchange;

(b) if so, details of the result achieved on each point since decanalisation; and

(c) whether there has been any review of the policy, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. While export of processed mica has declined after decanalisation (except in 1996-97), export of canalised mica scrap, cuttings and waste has increased. Export figures of processed mica and mica scrap for the last four years are enclosed. Statement *(See below)*. As regards employment, mica mining industry has sharply declined from 835 mines employing 25000 labour to 35 mines employing 2500 labour.

(c) The proposal for revival of mica industry has been engaging the attention of the Ministry. The proposal was reviewed in March, 1998. Various options to boost mica exports have been under consideration of the Ministry in consultation with the concerned Ministry/Departments. Efforts to increase exports including unit value realisation; and en-